What is claimed is:

1. In an interactive information distribution system including information provider equipment and information consumer equipment, said information provider equipment interactively providing information to at least one information consumer, a selection method comprising the steps of:

displaying, as a video layer on a display device, a video stream received by an information consumer and including one or more video objects, each of said video objects comprising one of a moving image and a still image;

displaying, as a graphics layer on said display device, one or more graphical objects, each of said one or more graphical objects being associated with a respective video object;

selectively emphasizing or de-emphasizing, in response to a first user interaction, at least one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects;

selecting, in response to a second user interaction, an emphasized or de-emphasized graphical object; and

transmitting, to said information provider equipment, indicia of said selected graphical object.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

each of said graphical objects comprises a bitmap image stored in said information consumer equipment;

each of said stored bitmap images comprises a shape parameter and a position parameter, said shape parameter defining a shape of said bitmap image, said position parameter defining a display position of said bitmap image within said graphics layer; and

each of said graphical objects having shape and position parameters cooperating with shape and position parameters of said corresponding video objects.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein:

at least one graphic object comprises a bitmap image having shape and position parameters that are predefined.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein:

at least one graphic object comprises a bitmap image having shape and position parameters that are defined by said information provider equipment and coupled to said information subscriber equipment.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein:

said shape parameter comprises a rectilinear shape parameter, and said position parameter comprises and X-Y grid border parameter.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein:

said shape parameter comprises a non-rectilinear shape parameter, and said position parameter comprises and X-Y grid border parameter.

7. The method of claim 2, wherein:

said at least one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects graphic is selectively emphasized or de-emphasized by adapting at least one of a chrominance and a luminance parameter of said respective bitmap image.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein:

said at least one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects graphic is selectively emphasized or de-emphasized by adapting at least one of a shape parameter and a position parameter of said respective bitmap image.

9. The method of claim 2, wherein each of said information subscribers stores a plurality of graphic layers comprising one or more respective graphic objects, said method further comprising the step of:

receiving, from said information provider equipment, indicium of an appropriate graphic layer for display; and

displaying, on said display device, said appropriate graphic layer.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein each of said information subscribers stores a plurality of graphic layers comprising one or more respective graphic objects, said method further comprising the step of:

determining, by examining said video stream received from said information provider equipment, an appropriate graphic layer for display; and

displaying, on said display device, said appropriate graphic layer.

11. In an information distribution system providing, to one or more information receivers, a plurality of information streams, a method for use in an information receiver comprising the steps of:

decoding a first video stream, said first decoded video stream including one or more video objects, each of said video objects comprising one of a moving image and a still image;

selecting, in response to said decoded first video stream, one of a plurality of stored bitmap overlays, said selected bitmap overlay including one or more graphical objects, each of said one or more graphical objects being associated with a respective video object in said first decoded video stream;

displaying, on a display device, said first decoded video stream as a video layer and said selected bitmap overlay as a graphics layer;

selectively emphasizing or de-emphasizing, in response to a first user interaction, one of said graphical objects associated with said respective video objects;

selecting, in response to a second user interaction, said emphasized or de-emphasized graphical object; and

in the case of said selected graphical object being associated with a second video stream, performing the steps of:

decoding said second video stream;

displaying, on said display device, said second decoded video stream as said video layer.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein:

in the case of said second video stream not including video objects, performing the step of:

removing, from said displayed graphic layer, at least those graphic objects that are not associated with video objects in said decoded second video stream.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein:

in the case of said second video stream including video objects, performing the steps of:

removing, from said displayed graphic layer, at least those graphic objects that are not associated with video objects in said decoded second video stream;

selecting, in response to said decoded second video stream, a second one of said plurality of stored bitmap overlays, said second selected bitmap overlay including one or more graphical objects, each of said one or more graphical

objects being associated with a respective video object in said second decoded video stream; and

displaying, on said display device, said selected second bitmap overlay as said graphics layer.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein:

each said graphic objects being associated with a program identification (PID), said PID identifying an information stream to be decoded upon selection of said respective graphic object.

15. In a system providing a plurality of programs to at least one consumer, said plurality of programs having associated time parameters and channel parameters, a method of providing program guide information to said at least one consumer comprising the steps of:

(a) forming, for a first plurality of channels, a first program guide information stream, said first program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of said first plurality of channels during a predetermined period, said first program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters;

(b) forming, for each of a second plurality of channels, a second program guide information stream, said second program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of said second plurality of channels during said predetermined time period, said second program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters, said second program guide video objects arranged in substantially the same manner as said first program guide video objects; and

(c) providing, so said at least one consumer, said first and second program guide information streams, said first and second program guide information streams being temporally aligned according to said predefined time period.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said first and second program guide information streams provide, to said consumer, contextually related program guide information comprising programming offered by each of said first plurality of channels and said second plurality of channels within said predetermined time period.

17. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

continuously repeating steps (a) through (c) for each of a plurality of predefined time periods.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said step of providing (c) comprises the steps of:

encoding each program guide information stream associated with each of said plurality of predefined time periods as a single logical stream;

combining each logical stream having a common predefined time period into a single physical stream; and

transporting, to said consumer one or more physical streams including respective combined logical streams.

19. In a system providing a plurality of programs to at least one consumer, said plurality of programs having associated time parameters and channel parameters, a method of retrieving provided program guide information comprising the steps of:

selecting, in response to user interaction, a first time period of interest;

identifying a first physical channel including program guide information associated with said first time period of interest;

decoding a first logical stream within said first identified physical channel, said first logical stream comprising a first program guide information stream, said first program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of a first plurality of channels during a first predetermined time period including said first time period of interest, said program guide information stream including video objects associated with respective program selection parameters;

retrieving, from a memory, a graphic overlay comprising a plurality of graphic objects, each of said plurality of graphic objects having a predefined display position visually cooperative with a display position of a corresponding video object, said graphic objects being active to selectively emphasize one of said video objects; and

presenting, on a presentation device, said first program guide information stream of said identified physical channel and said graphic overlay.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

receiving an indicium of user interaction; and

in response to said user interaction comprising a selection of a graphic object associated with one of a second plurality of channels, performing the steps of:

decoding a second logical stream within said identified first physical channel, said second logical stream comprising a second program guide information stream, said second program guide information stream comprising a video representation of programming offered by each of a second plurality of channels during said first predetermined time period, said second program guide information stream including video objects associated with

respective program selection parameters, said video objects visually cooperating with said graphic overlay objects;

presenting, on a presentation device, said second program guide information stream of said first identified physical channel and said graphic overlay.

21. Subscriber apparatus for use in interactive information distribution system, said interactive information distribution system comprising an information stream for receiving information from an information provider, and a back channel for transmitting information requests to said information provider, said subscriber apparatus comprising:

a receiver, coupled to a controller, for receiving said information stream;

a transmitter, coupled to said controller, for transmitting information requests to said information provider; and

a video signal generator, coupled to said controller, for generating a video signal derived from information included in said information stream;

said input device selecting one of a plurality of graphical objects included in said video signal, said graphical objects being associated with respective applets stored in information provider equipment, said applets comprising menu information and associated image information; and

said controller, in response to said input device, causing an applet request to be transmitted to said information provider, and in response to a reception of an information stream including said requested applet, executing said applet to produce graphical object information and video information for said video signal generator.